WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A near end speech coding method for coding speech to be recognized (STBR) for completion of word-level recognition by a machine at a far end in relation to a dialogue between the near and far ends having an associated vocabulary size (V), said method comprising:

extracting recognition feature vectors (f) frame-wise from received speech to be recognized (STBR);

choosing a number of bits (B) per codebook index or an associated codebook size (Sz) corresponding to the dialogue or an associated vocabulary size (V) from among a plurality of choices;

selecting indices (q) from entries of a codebook having the associated size (Sz) corresponding to the extracted recognition feature vectors (f), and

forming signals for transmission to the far end, which signals are derived from a string of the selected indices (q-string).

2. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the choice of number of bits (B) or associated codebook size (Sz) is done to substantially optimize a metric which is a function of a bit rate (BR) of the formed signals and an expected recognition rate (RR) taking into account the vocabulary size (V) associated with the dialogue.

3. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the formed signals to be transmitted include an indication of the number of bits (B) per recognition vector or associated

codebook size (Sz).

4. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the formed signals to be transmitted include an indication of the number of bits (B) per recognition vector or associated codebook size (Sz).

5. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the formation of the signals includes time-wise compression of the string of the selected indices (q-string).

6. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the formation of the signals includes time-wise compression of the string of the selected indices (q-string).

7. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said method is carried out by a mobile communication device (MS).

8. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said method is carried out by a mobile communication device (MS).

9. A communication device for receiving near end speech to be recognized (STBR) and for communicating with a machine at a far end for completing word-level recognition in relation to a dialogue between the near and far ends having an associated vocabulary size (V), said device comprising:

a feature vector extractor for extracting

recognition feature vectors (f) framewise from received speech to be recognized (STBR);

a decision block for choosing a number of bits (B) per codebook index or an associated codebook size (Sz) corresponding to the dialogue or an associated vocabulary size (V) from among a plurality of choices;

a coder for selecting indicies (q) from entries of a codebook having the associated size (Sz) corresponding to the extracted recognition feature vectors (f), and

a signal former for forming signals in accordance with a protocol for transmission to the far end, which signals are derived from a string of the selected indices (q-string).

10. The device as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the choice of number of bits (B) or associated codebook size (Sz) is done to substantially optimize a metric which is a function of a bit rate (BR) of the formed signals and an expected recognition rate (RR) taking into account the vocabulary size (V) associated with the dialogue.

11. The device as claimed in Claims 9, wherein the formed signals to be transmitted include an indication of the number of bits (B) per recognition vector or associated codebook size (Sz).

12. The device as claimed in Claims 10, wherein the formed signals to be transmitted include an indication of the number of bits (B) per recognition vector or associated codebook size (Sz).

13. The device as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the formation of the signals includes time-wise compression of the string of the selected indices (q-string).

14. The device as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the formation of the signals includes time-wise compression of the string of the selected indices (q-string).

15. A speech recognition method comprising:

receiving signals which are derived from a string of the indices (q-string) selected from entries in a codebook corresponding to recognition feature vectors (f) extracted framewise from speech to be recognized (STBR), which signals include an indication of the number of bits (B) per codebook index or associated codebook size (Sz);

obtaining the string of indices (q-string) from the received signals;

obtaining the corresponding recognition feature vectors (f) from the string of indices (q-string) using a codebook having the associated size (Sz); and

applying the recognition feature vectors (f) to a word-level recognition process (HMM).

16. The method as claimed in Claim 15, further comprising taking an action in dependence on a result of the recognition process.

17. An electromagnetic signal in which is encoded first data derived from a string of indicies (q) corresponding to entries from a codebook, which entries

correspond to recognition feature vectors (f) extracted from speech, and second data indicating a number of bits (B) per recognition feature vector (f) or an associated codebook size (Sz).